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Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic

I. Introduction

1. In his report on Chad and the Central African Republic dated 22 December 2006 (S/2006/1019), submitted pursuant to paragraphs 9 (d) and 13 of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006), my predecessor provided an overview of the political, security, humanitarian and human rights situations in both countries and the challenges related to the protection of refugees, internally displaced persons and other civilians in areas near the border with the Sudan. The report also outlined some preliminary options regarding the possible mandate, structure and concept of operations of a multidimensional United Nations presence in both eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic, which would seek to improve the security situation in the areas along the borders between those two countries and the Sudan.

2. The Security Council considered the report during informal consultations held on 10 January 2007. Subsequently, following a meeting held on 16 January 2007, the President of the Security Council issued a statement (S/PRST/2007/2) that took note of the report of 22 December 2006 and authorized the immediate return of the technical assessment mission to the region, in order to finalize recommendations on the size, structure and mandate of a United Nations multidimensional presence.

3. The 2007 presidential statement also requested that I deploy as soon as possible an advance mission to Chad and the Central African Republic, in consultation with their Governments, as envisaged in paragraph 88 of the 22 December 2006 report, in order to accelerate preparations for an early decision on the possible deployment of a multidimensional presence in those countries.

4. The present report reflects the findings of the second multidimensional technical assessment mission, which visited Chad and the Central African Republic from 21 January to 6 February 2007. It also includes a description of the advance mission and detailed proposals for the size, structure and mandate of a United Nations multidimensional presence in the two countries.

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II. Update on recent developments

A. Chad

5. Since my predecessor's report of 22 December 2006 was finalized, the situation in Chad has remained volatile and unpredictable. Fighting between the Chadian armed forces and rebel groups, some of which are reportedly armed and supported by the Sudan, and attacks by militia on the civilian population have continued to destabilize eastern Chad, leading to widespread insecurity and human rights violations, including continued internal displacement of civilian populations. To address the situation, the Government of Chad has maintained a state of emergency in Wadi Fira, Ouaddai and Salamat, the three regions in eastern Chad that border the Sudan and the Central African Republic, as well as in N'Djamena.

6. In a positive development, on 24 December 2006, the Government and one faction of the rebel group Front Uni pour le Changement (FUC) signed an agreement in Tripoli that, among other things, called for armed elements of FUC to be integrated into the Chadian armed forces and the Chadian gendarmerie. Despite some difficulties in implementing the agreement, FUC is reportedly being gradually integrated into the Chadian armed forces and the Chadian gendarmerie. However, the agreement was disparaged by other rebel groups, including the Union of Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD), the Rally of Democratic Forces (RFD) and the Platform for Change, National Unity and Democracy, which questioned the military strength of FUC and decided, one day after the agreement was signed, to coordinate their military efforts against the Government.

7. Rebel activity continued throughout December 2006 and January 2007. On 13 January 2007, UFDD attacked and briefly occupied the town of Ounianga Kebir, located in the northern department of Tibesti, more than 350 kilometres west of the border with the Sudan. Then on 17 January 2007, UFDD and RFD combined forces to take the border town of Adé, following the relocation of a garrison of the Chadian armed forces from Adé to Goz Beida. The Chadian armed forces regained control of the town on 24 January, following an aerial attack on rebel positions.

8. In continuation of this pattern, on 1 February 2007 UFDD struck again, attacking the eastern town of Adré, which is located on the border with the Sudan, 30 kilometres west of El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur. Violent fighting ensued in the following days, with the Chadian armed forces maintaining control of the town and pushing the rebels back into the Sudan. Details of the attack were communicated to me in a note verbale dated 1 February 2007 from the Government of Chad. Despite these flare-ups, it can be said that the security situation in eastern Chad improved significantly in the second half of January. That was due in part to the successful counteroffensive, which enabled Chadian Government forces to push the rebels back to the immediate border area or, beyond, into Darfur.

9. While violence associated with rebel activities continues, it should be noted that civilians have generally not been targeted by the rebels. Militia attacks, on the other hand, have targeted civilians. Throughout late December and early January, militia groups attacked Chadian villages in the Dar Sila area of the Ouaddai region. In one particularly brutal assault, militia groups attacked Chadian civilians near the town of Koukou Angarana on 15 and 16 December 2006, killing 30, including local residents, internally displaced persons and a few Sudanese refugees who had

wandered outside their camps. That was followed on 16 December by heavy fighting between the Chadian armed forces and militia groups around the town of Habilé, which is in the same area, forcing 9,000 internally displaced people who had sought refuge around Habilé to move towards Koukou Angarana; that was the second time they had been forced to flee for their lives.

10. As a direct result of the ongoing violence and the attacks by militias on Chadian populations, the number of internally displaced persons in eastern Chad had risen from an estimated 92,000 in December 2006 to approximately 120,000 by 1 February 2007. Most of this new displacement occurred in the Dar Sila area. Meanwhile, the refugee population for all of eastern Chad has stabilized at around 232,000, of whom 220,000 are hosted in 12 camps supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with the remainder living with local communities.

11. The increase in internally displaced persons (IDPs) has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in eastern Chad. Newly displaced persons consistently settle on the periphery of refugee camps and existing towns or villages. Since direct assistance to internally displaced persons has thus far been insufficient, they are relying to some extent on refugees and local populations to share their meagre resources. This often leads to tension when those resources are particularly scarce or valuable, as is the case with firewood, fodder and water. In addition, thousands of items of unexploded ordnance are scattered in the vicinity of several localities, preventing access to those scarce resources. The decision of the Government to allocate $8 million to assist internally displaced persons is a constructive step, which should be complemented by additional international assistance.

12. The response to increased humanitarian needs in eastern Chad is also hampered by the security situation. In view of the continuing instability, relief organizations are required to take precautions, including limiting the number of staff operating in the region, and in some locations permitting them to move only with armed escort, thus making it difficult to ensure the safe provision of much needed assistance. However, contingency planning, including reliance on Chadian staff and the refugees themselves, has thus far prevented any major disruptions in essential services, notably the provision of food aid, health care and sanitation in refugee camps. The security situation has, however, hampered the provision of assistance to the IDPs.

B. Central African Republic

13. In the Central African Republic, there has been noteworthy progress on the political front since my predecessor's report dated 22 December 2006. The President of the Central African Republic agreed to engage in an inclusive dialogue with opposition parties and representatives of the armed rebellion. A Central African civil society group, the Group of the Wise, comprising representatives of all the religions present in the country, the leader of the follow-up committee on the implementation of the results of the 2003 national dialogue and the leader of the national human rights associations, is leading the current dialogue process. The Group is being assisted by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA).

14. On 28 January 2007, President Francois Bozizé met with the representatives of various rebel groups operating in the Central African Republic in Syrte, Libya, and, on 2 February 2007, the Government of the Central African Republic and those rebel groups signed a peace agreement that provided, inter alia, for the immediate cessation of hostilities. The next step in the dialogue process will be the holding of further consultations and developing agreements for national reconciliation. The conclusive phase of the dialogue is scheduled to be held in the coming months, when it is expected that a comprehensive accord will be signed among all the national stakeholders.

15. Meanwhile, civilian populations have started to return to the towns in the north-east part of the country, which had been occupied by rebels and subsequently recaptured by the forces of the Central African armed forces (FACA), supported by the subregional multinational force (FOMUC) of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), and the French forces in the Central African Republic.

16. The re-establishment of Government presence in Birao has also allowed humanitarian actors to initiate assessments in the prefecture of Vakaga. Their findings confirmed that some towns and villages have suffered significant destruction and segments of the population may remain internally displaced and fear renewed attacks, as well as reprisals on the part of the national army for their alleged support to the rebellion.

17. While the focus of the technical assessment mission was on north-eastern Central African Republic, the security situation in the north-western part of the country remains volatile. On 15 January 2007, a group of rebels reportedly attacked the town of Paoua in the north-west part of the country, causing casualties and injuries. In this context, and as indicated in the report dated 22 December 2006, the humanitarian situation in north-west Central African Republic is a matter of serious concern, as more than 70,000 internally displaced persons are living under threat of indiscriminate violence.

III. Technical assessment mission

A. Programme of work

18. The second technical assessment mission to Chad and the Central African Republic was led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and included staff from the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNHCR, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the United Nations Department of Safety and Security.

19. The assessment mission arrived in Chad on 21 January 2006, for two days of consultations with Chadian officials, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Chief of Military Staff and the inter-ministerial committee charged with coordinating contact with the assessment mission, and with the United Nations country team, the diplomatic community, humanitarian organizations and other stakeholders.

20. On 23 January 2007, the assessment mission, accompanied by liaison officers from the Chadian armed forces, the gendarmerie and the police, travelled to Abéché

in eastern Chad, where it undertook consultations with local authorities, representatives of the United Nations country team and humanitarian organizations.

21. From 24 to 28 January, the assessment mission visited the towns of Adré, Bahai, Biltine, Farchana, Goz Beïda, Iriba, Koukou Angarana and Tine. It also visited the refugee camps and internally displaced persons settlements close to those locations, including Farchana, Gaga, Goz Amer, Iridimi and Oure Cassoni. The team received direct operational support throughout its visit to Chad from UNHCR and vital helicopter transportation from the French military stationed in Abéché.

22. On 30 January the assessment mission travelled to Bangui for consultations with Government officials and representatives from the armed forces, police and gendarmerie; briefings with BONUCA and the United Nations country team; and a meeting with the diplomatic community.

23. From 31 January to 1 February, members of the assessment mission travelled to the prefecture of Vakaga of the Central African Republic, for a first-hand assessment of the situation in the town of Birao and the surrounding area. That group subsequently travelled to Am Dafok on the border with the Sudan for additional fact-finding.

24. The assessment mission returned to N'Djamena from 2 to 6 February, where it was joined by Hédi Annabi, Assistant Secretary-General for peacekeeping operations, who met with President Déby on 5 February 2007, and with other senior Government officials, as well as the United Nations country team and members of the diplomatic community in N'Djamena. The assessment team also shared its findings and preliminary conclusions with the inter-ministerial committee on 5 February.

B. Key findings: Chad

25. During the visit of the assessment mission to eastern Chad, local Chadian authorities and affected populations, as well as many humanitarian organizations expressed broad support for the early deployment of a multidimensional United Nations presence that would focus on the protection of civilians in the area and defusing border tensions. Chadian authorities, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the members of the diplomatic community in Chad were also of the view that a United Nations deployment should not be made directly contingent upon the establishment of an inclusive dialogue in Chad.

26. The assessment mission also contacted representatives of some rebel groups to inform them of the possible deployment of a multidimensional United Nations presence near the border with the Sudan. In response, rebel interlocutors stressed that they would not object to the presence of an impartial United Nations operation. However, if they perceived that the United Nations was actively working in support of Government military operations, they would view the United Nations force as a belligerent.

27. In assessing the security situation in eastern Chad, it is evident that activities of armed rebel movements seeking to overthrow the Government continue to destabilize the area. This is most clearly illustrated by the situation in Adré, which was attacked by rebel groups on 1 February 2007. The Chadian armed forces are focused on addressing the rebel threat, which is affecting their ability to provide

protection to the civilian population and ensure maintenance of law and order throughout the eastern part of the country.

28. During discussions with representatives of internally displaced persons and refugees it was also made clear that militia groups based in the Sudan and characterized as "Janjaweed", who cross into Chad to attack civilians, were seen as the foremost threat to their safety. Chadian civilians seemed to be the most frequent target of those attacks, which resulted in the partial destruction of the internally displaced persons site at Habilé, in the Salamat prefecture.

29. The mission also identified or confirmed other threats to civilian populations, in addition to incursions from the Sudan. The first of these was intercommunal tension and violence, particularly in the Dar Sila department of the Ouaddai region, where compelling evidence, including confidential testimony, indicated that local populations and internally displaced persons had been attacked, displaced and killed by militia largely composed of Chadian elements.

30. In addition, the assessment mission received numerous credible reports that Sudanese rebel groups were operating and openly recruiting in and around Oure Cassoni and Am Nabak camps near the border with the Sudan in the Wadi Fira region, as well as in other refugee camps, and that there were children among those being recruited. Although the Government and UNHCR agreed that these camps, which are very close to the border, should be moved deeper into the Chadian territory to ensure that their civilian and humanitarian character are preserved, no alternative suitable sites have been identified.

31. In the meantime, the security aspects of the crisis remain the focus of Chadian authorities. The Government has made clear that it will not engage rebel groups in dialogue until they hand over their weapons. As a result, there is as yet no substantial political or reconciliation process in place to formally identify and address grievances of Chadian rebel groups or to discuss the causes of intercommunal violence, which poses a serious threat to the safety and security of Chadian civilians. In addition, it seems that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have been overwhelmed by the intensity and frequency of the violence of the last two years, although subsequent to the signing of the agreement between FUC and the Government on 24 December, a reconciliation agreement was signed between the Dedjo and Arab groups in south-eastern Chad, to address the requirements for self-defence, in response to repeated attacks of "Janjaweed" militia.

32. During the course of its visit, the assessment mission also had first-hand experience of the logistical challenges related to deploying a multidimensional mission to eastern Chad. This vast territory of approximately 165,000 square kilometres is criss-crossed by wadis (riverbeds) that, while dry for much of the year, can flood in minutes during the rainy season (May-October). Most roads are sand or dirt tracks that become impassable during this period, cutting off large sections of territory for long periods. In addition, there is only one airstrip in the region capable of servicing large aircraft, and little or no communications infrastructure in place.

33. At the conclusion of the assessment mission, President Déby received Mr. Annabi on 5 February in Am Timam in eastern Chad. The President recalled that he had previously given his agreement in principle to the deployment of a United Nations multidimensional presence. However, he expressed concerns about the

military component of the proposed mission. He stressed that Chad had asked the Security Council in November 2006 to deploy a "civilian force" to the camps in eastern Chad. The President emphasized that the Government of Chad had not requested the deployment of a military force. Furthermore, he expressed the view that the international community was considering the deployment of a United Nations military force in Chad because the Sudan had refused to accept the deployment of a United Nations operation in Darfur. President Déby stressed that he wished to see additional details about the proposed operation, in writing, before taking a final decision. Accordingly, in addition to briefing extensively and in detail the Chadian inter-ministerial committee on its findings at the end of the mission, the technical assessment mission handed over, on 6 February, to General N'Gomine, military coordinator of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chair of the inter-ministerial committee, an aide-memoire describing its proposed recommendations on the mandate, size and structure of a United Nations multidimensional operation in eastern Chad. The technical assessment mission pointed out that those recommendations were subject to the approval of the Secretary-General and ultimately the Security Council.

C. Key findings: Central African Republic

34. Much of the civilian population that had fled Birao during the hostilities of late November 2006 had returned, and the situation in Birao, as well as Am Dafok on the border with the Sudan, appeared to have stabilized owing to the presence of FACA troops, the gendarmerie and the police in both towns, along with the presence of a small French detachment in Birao. However, there are still pockets of insecurity in the Vakaga prefecture, in the area of Gordil and Tiringoulou, and north of Bria. Some sources estimate the number of internally displaced persons in the region (mainly of the Goula ethnic group) at around 10,000. Remnants of the rebel groups are still reportedly present in those areas.

35. In addition, there are still a number of other factors contributing to insecurity, including criminal elements and poachers who take advantage of the lawlessness in the area and porous borders with the Sudan. The assessment mission was also made aware of allegations of human rights violations and violence targeting civilian populations, including by FACA in reprisal for those communities, which are perceived as supporting the rebels.

36. Civilians in the Vakaga prefecture are making every effort to return to a normal life. While there is no evidence of a humanitarian emergency at present, isolation, economic marginalization and recent insecurity have created serious relief and recovery needs that, for the time being, the central Government seems unable to address.

37. The team noted that the decision of the Government of the Central African Republic to close its border with the Sudan is having a negative impact on the traditional trade routes from the Sudan into the Vakaga prefecture. Local populations are almost entirely dependent on the free flow of goods and services across that border.

38. During its brief visit, the assessment mission did not see compelling evidence that the situation in the Vakaga prefecture is directly related to the crisis in Darfur. However, mindful of the events of October to December 2006, when a number of

towns in the Vakaga prefecture were occupied by rebel groups that had allegedly received external support, the assessment mission took note of the Government's view that the two situations are linked. It also noted the Government's call for the United Nations deployment to address the possible impact of the Darfur crisis on the Central African Republic.

IV. Advance mission

A. Background

39. In consideration of the above, and pursuant to the presidential statement issued by the Security Council on 16 January 2007 (S/PRST/2007/2), I have initiated the necessary steps to deploy an advance mission to Chad and the Central African Republic. The advance mission, which would be known as the United Nations Mission in Chad and the Central African Republic, or Mission des Nations Unies au Tchad et en République Centrafricaine (MiNUTAC), would prepare for the possible multidimensional presence foreshadowed in the presidential statement of 16 January 2007.

40. Throughout the technical assessment mission the broad parameters of the advance mission were discussed with local authorities and other stakeholders. In the light of those discussions and based on the guidance provided by the Security Council, preparations for its establishment are currently under way as follows.

B. Mandate

41. In accordance with the presidential statement of 16 January 2007, the mandate of the Mission has been derived from paragraph 88 of the report of the Secretary-General of 22 December 2006 on Chad and the Central African Republic. The Mission's activities would therefore focus on those preparations, which would position the multidimensional presence to protect civilians and assist in mitigating the spill-over of the Darfur conflict. This would require collecting information on the situation in eastern Chad in order to develop a full understanding of the security and protection challenges that a United Nations multidimensional presence would face.

42. Should the Security Council authorize a multidimensional United Nations presence in Chad and the Central African Republic, it is anticipated that the Mission would be merged into that operation.

C. Tasks

43. To accomplish the above, the Mission would have to establish effective liaison with all key stakeholders (including the Governments, the national military, police and gendarmerie, all credible opposition groups, French forces, the humanitarian community, civil society, the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS), the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and FOMUC) to initiate preparatory activities, including further detailed planning and logistical measures in anticipation of the deployment of a multidimensional United Nations operation, support the

establishment of a framework for constructive dialogue between the Governments concerned in the region and between the Government and opposition groups, liaise with the United Nations country teams in both Chad and the Central African Republic, and BONUCA in the Central African Republic to ensure complementarities, liaise with the broader humanitarian community in the two countries, and develop mechanisms that will contribute to improving the security environment and protecting civilians with a view to contributing to a reduction of violence in the region.

D. Composition

44. The Mission would be led by a Head of Mission, who would be the Representative of the Secretary-General for Chad and would be responsible for implementing the peacekeeping mandate in north-eastern Central African Republic. The Mission would be comprised of political, civil affairs, legal, military, police, judicial, corrections, humanitarian, human rights, mine action, public information, conduct and discipline, safety and security, administrative and mission support personnel who would implement the mandate of the Mission under the overall supervision of the Head of Mission.

E. Location

45. The Mission headquarters would be located in N'Djamena, where the Head of Mission would be based. A regional office in Abéché and a liaison office in Bangui would also be established. At a later stage, security conditions permitting, the Mission would also establish multidisciplinary field offices in Iriba, Adré and Goz Beida in eastern Chad and Birao in north-eastern Central African Republic.

F. Size

46. In addition to the Head of Mission, the Mission would include military, police and civilian personnel. A total of 35 military officers would establish liaison relationships with the Chadian armed forces, FACA and other stakeholders in N'Djamena and Bangui and in the vicinity of the five identified field offices, and would collect information in order to inform and finalize detailed plans for the envisaged multidimensional presence. In addition, 39 United Nations police officers would finalize specific aspects of a detailed strategy to address policing requirements of refugee camps, key towns where humanitarian field offices are located, humanitarian commuting routes and areas of IDP concentrations, assist in the process of identifying Chadian police and gendarmes for secondment, training and eventual deployment to the envisaged peacekeeping operation, prepare agreements with the Government of Chad regarding division of responsibilities between United Nations police and Chadian law enforcement officials, and initiate preparations for the training and deployment of United Nations police to eastern Chad. The activities of United Nations military and police personnel would be complemented by the work of an appropriate number of substantive civilian staff in the areas of political affairs, human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian liaison, public information, mine action and safety and security. The Mission would also

include the necessary mission support personnel, who would be responsible for all aspects of logistical and administrative preparation for the possible establishment of a multidimensional operation.

V. Proposed United Nations multidimensional presence in Chad and the Central African Republic

A. Mandate

47. Should the Security Council decide to establish a multidimensional United Nations presence in eastern Chad and the north-eastern part of the Central African Republic, I would recommend that it be entrusted with the following main tasks, which take into account the continuing instability along the borders between the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic and the threat that this poses to the safety of the civilian population and the conduct of humanitarian operations:

Security and protection of civilians

- Assist in protecting civilians at risk, including internally displaced persons and refugees, within the capabilities of the United Nations operation and in its areas of deployment.
- Assist with the maintenance of law and order in the refugee camps, key towns where humanitarian field offices are located, humanitarian commuting routes, internally displaced persons sites and host communities.
- Deploy at key locations in the border area, with a view to reducing tension and facilitating confidence-building.
- Liaise with the national army, the gendarmerie, the police force, judicial authorities, and prison officials in Chad and the Central African Republic to contribute to the creation of a more secure environment in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic.
- Facilitate the provision and the free movement of humanitarian assistance.
- Liaise with the Government of Chad and UNHCR in support of their efforts to relocate refugee camps in close proximity to the border, including with regard to the provision of logistical support for the relocation of such camps.
- Take all necessary measures to protect United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment and ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel.
- Liaise closely with the African Union, AMIS, UNMIS and the Government of the Sudan to exchange information on emerging threats in the border region.

Good offices

- Facilitate improvement of relations between Chad and the Sudan and between the Central African Republic and the Sudan, particularly with regard to the implementation of the Tripoli and N'Djamena Agreements.

- Support, as necessary, the efforts of the Government of Chad to establish a sustained political dialogue with unarmed opposition groups and coordinate with BONUCA regarding its support to similar efforts by the Government of the Central African Republic.
- Assist, as necessary, in developing an appropriate framework for the cessation of hostilities, and reconciliation between the Governments and armed opposition groups.

Human rights

- Contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights by monitoring, documenting and reporting on violations in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic.
- Conduct preliminary investigations in cases of major human rights violations in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic, with particular attention to sexual and gender-based violence, and to recommend corrective action to relevant actors.
- Support, within its capabilities, efforts aimed at strengthening capacity of local authorities and civil society through training in international human rights standards.

B. Area of operations

48. The area of operations of the Mission would be eastern Chad, specifically, the Wadi Fira, Ouaddai and Salamat regions and the Ennedi Est department; and north-eastern Central African Republic, including the Vakaga prefecture and areas of Haute-Kotto prefecture that border the Sudan.

C. Mission structure

49. The United Nations presence in Chad and the Central African Republic would be a multidimensional operation composed of several components, led by a Head of Mission, who would be my Special Representative for Chad, and would be responsible for implementing the peacekeeping mandate in north-eastern Central African Republic. In this regard, my Special Representative would have overall authority over the activities of the United Nations, providing overall management and policy guidance and ensuring that all United Nations activities pursue a coordinated and coherent approach in the Mission's area of operation, in accordance with established United Nations policy.

50. The senior leadership of the Mission, which would be based at the Mission headquarters in N'Djamena, would also include a Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, a Chief of Staff, a Force Commander at the rank of Major General, a Police Commissioner and a Director of Administration. This senior management team would report directly to my Special Representative. In order to ensure effective liaison between the Mission and the aid community on matters pertaining to humanitarian affairs, the United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinator for Chad would be a member of the Mission's senior management team, while retaining his/her relevant reporting lines to the Emergency Relief Coordinator

and the United Nations Development Programme Administrator. The Mission headquarters would also include representatives of all substantive components, as well as the necessary safety and security and mission support personnel.

51. A joint mission analysis cell would be established under the direction of the Head of Mission at its headquarters in N'Djamena to collect and analyse information and ensure that the views and expertise of all relevant components of the Mission are reflected in informing his or her decisions. To that end, the cell would be staffed with military, police, political affairs, safety and security, humanitarian and human rights personnel and other components, as required. The mission-wide analysis work of the cell would be complemented by a joint operations centre, which would be established in the regional office in Abéché and would be staffed with the same cross-section of Mission personnel as the cell. The joint operations centre would focus on providing real-time information and situational awareness to the Head of Mission and senior management.

52. The majority of the Mission personnel would be based in eastern Chad. The Mission would therefore establish a regional office in Abéché, which would also serve as the forward headquarters for the military and police component of the Mission. Conduct of the day-to-day functions of the regional office would be managed by a Deputy Special Representative, who would be supported by a regional management team comprised of a Senior Political Affairs Officer, a Deputy Force Commander, a Deputy Police Commissioner and a Deputy Chief of Administration, as well as civil affairs, human rights, humanitarian liaison, public information, mission support and safety and security personnel.

53. To cover the large territory of eastern Chad effectively, it would be essential for the Mission to be forward leaning, and to establish multidimensional field offices in the following key locations: Iriba, Adré and Goz Beida and, possibly, a liaison office in Biltine. Smaller liaison offices could also be established in Bahai and Nzili. These offices would report to my Special Representative through his Deputy in Abéché.

54. With regard to the Central African Republic, the Mission would establish a liaison office in Bangui, which would be co-located and work closely with BONUCA. It would be managed by a senior political affairs officer and a civilian liaison officer, and would include one military officer, one police officer, one human rights officer and one humanitarian affairs liaison officer, as well as a small mission support component. Liaison with senior levels of the Government of the Central African Republic in Bangui would continue to be led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic.

55. In north-eastern Central African Republic, the Mission would establish a multidimensional presence in the town of Birao, to include a small civil affairs, military and police presence, as well as human rights, humanitarian liaison and mission support personnel.

56. The Mission would be deployed in phases, with the first priority being the establishment of a viable regional office and forward headquarters in Abéché, to be followed by the establishment of field offices in eastern Chad and, finally, the establishment of the liaison and field office in the Central African Republic.

D. Component activities

Good offices and civil affairs

57. The Mission would include good offices and civil affairs components. The good offices component would provide support and advice to my Special Representative in the performance of his/her tasks, as described in paragraph 49 above. To this end, the good offices component would consult regularly with key national and regional stakeholders and would monitor and provide analysis on major political and administrative developments. The component would also be responsible for reporting to United Nations headquarters. The civil affairs component would liaise with the local authorities and civil society in the areas of deployment to ensure a constructive relationship between these stakeholders and the Mission, including through exchange of information. Civil affairs officers would also promote and support local reconciliation initiatives. Both the good offices and civil affairs components would have staff in N'Djamena and in field locations in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic, as well as in the liaison office in Bangui.

Military component

58. The military component would assist in protecting civilians at risk, facilitate delivery of humanitarian relief, and seek through its presence to reduce tension and deter conflict, with a view to establishing a more secure environment in its area of deployment.

59. Liaison with all relevant stakeholders, especially the armed forces of Chad and the Central African Republic and any other armed elements present in the area, would be critical to ensure an understanding of, and respect for, the impartial character of the United Nations force. Close liaison with AMIS and UNMIS should also be established for the exchange of information on potential threats developing on either side of the border, in order to provide early warning.

60. A framework of infantry battalions would be deployed to provide an effective presence through ground and air patrols, day and night, in order to reassure and discourage attacks against the civilian population. The provision of wide area security would also expand the zone in which humanitarian actors could safely operate. Night patrolling would be particularly important and the battalions with supporting aviation should be capable of and equipped for night operations. To achieve an early effect on the ground, the rapid deployment of a minimum of two infantry battalions with engineer and medical support would be required.

61. In order to identify emerging threats, the force should possess surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities such as observation aircraft, armed helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles, as well as ground reconnaissance elements capable of long-range patrols. In order to react effectively to impeding threats to the civilian population, the military force must be capable and ready to act. The force should be authorized to take robust action, supported by appropriate rules of engagement, and be equipped to respond robustly to any hostile action. Armed helicopters would provide an effective and rapid response, as well as quick reaction forces at force and sector levels, deployed in armoured personnel carriers, high mobility vehicles and military aviation.

62. To reduce tensions in the border area and deter conflict, United Nations military forces would patrol and observe potential flashpoints in the area of operations. This would not interfere with the sovereign responsibility of the Chadian and Central African Republic authorities to secure their border with the Sudan. The United Nations military forces could also investigate and verify allegations of hostile actions in the Chad-Sudan border region, and could subsequently provide the Security Council with an assessment of such incidents.

63. In the Central African Republic, a small security presence would be needed to assist in confidence-building and deter conflict. Such a presence could be provided by a United Nations deployment of approximately 500 personnel.

64. Military engineers would be critical in each sector, initially to construct "bare-base" camps and then to improve the force's mobility by constructing helicopter landing grounds and improving tracks. The force would also require medical and logistic enabling capabilities.

65. In summary, the assessment team concluded that the military operation would require high-quality military commanders and troops, able to operate in complex scenarios of external and internal threats; good liaison, reconnaissance, information and surveillance; high operational mobility; and robust military capability to deal with any armed threat.

66. The military force would be headquartered in N'Djamena with a small staff and a liaison office in Bangui. Military operations would be controlled from a forward operational headquarters in Abéché, which would be co-located with the Mission regional office. The force would be organized in four sectors, three in Chad and one in the Central African Republic. Sector headquarters would be located in eastern Chad in the area of Iriba in the north, Adré in the centre and Goz Beida in the south. In the Central African Republic, the sector headquarters would be located in Birao, co-located with the Mission's liaison office in Birao.

67. Option A would be a force larger than a standard infantry brigade, comprising five infantry battalions, a force reconnaissance company and a force reserve of two infantry companies, supported by a military air component of 18 utility helicopters, two armed observation helicopters, an unmanned aerial vehicle detachment and one fixed-wing observation aircraft. The force would be enabled and supported by four engineer companies, an airbase engineering company, transport and logistic companies, a level two hospital in Abéché and an enhanced level one facility at Birao. The number of engineer units could be reduced after the initial establishment of the force. Some United Nations military observers could also be deployed, subject to security considerations. The total force would number approximately 6,000. The feasibility of this option would be largely dependent upon the availability of military aviation, which would give this force the flexibility needed to deploy its units quickly by air in order to meet operational requirements and establish a credible security presence over a wide area. At the same time, this force would occupy a relatively small number of bases with fewer troops than would otherwise be required if the military aviation resources identified in this option is not provided. It would require the acceptance of a higher degree of risk regarding the protection of civilians. This option would also render the force more vulnerable to the constraints of weather on operations. The generation of sufficient and capable military helicopters may be extremely challenging, based on previous experience, and failure to generate the aviation required would render this option unfeasible.

68. Option B would be a force the size of a standard infantry division, comprising nine infantry battalions, with two or three battalions in each sector in Chad and two infantry companies in the Central African Republic, a force reconnaissance company and a force reserve of a light battalion, supported by a military air component of nine utility helicopters, with two armed observation helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicle detachments and two fixed-wing observation aircraft. The total force would number some 10,900. This option places more reliance on infantry troops being in place to meet operational requirements, while sacrificing some air mobility. It offers a lower degree of risk regarding the protection of civilians and would be less vulnerable to the constraints of weather.

69. Should the situation in Chad or the Central African Republic deteriorate further during or after a United Nations deployment, provision should be made under either option for a rapidly deployable capacity, over the horizon, at a minimum of one further infantry battalion of 850 all ranks, authorized by the Council at the time of mandate approval, in order to reinforce the mission in extremis.

Police

70. As suggested in the report of my predecessor dated 22 December 2006, United Nations police would undertake to police refugee camps (12 locations) and support national law enforcement activities in the vicinity of those towns in eastern Chad that are associated with IDPs, refugees and humanitarian operations, namely Abéché, Bahai, Iriba, Farchana, Guereda and Goz Beida. These tasks could be performed only in combination with a United Nations military presence that would be required to provide wide area security for United Nations activities.

71. In the light of the difficulties related to identifying and deploying sufficient international personnel with appropriate language skills, the Mission would build on the approach taken by UNHCR in the refugee camps. In this context, it is assessed that some 800 Chadian gendarmes and police would be needed. These officers would be seconded to the United Nations and put under the operational command of the United Nations Police Commissioner. They would wear distinctive uniforms and would receive the basic logistic support normally provided to a United Nations police officer on duty in a peacekeeping operation, as well as a stipend.

72. The Mission would also require some 260 international United Nations police officers, who would be responsible for the selection of Chadian officers for secondment to the United Nations police, with special care taken with regard to ethnic and gender balance of those selected and intensive predeployment training of the Chadian officers selected. The United Nations police officers would advise Chadian personnel and monitor all police operations at all levels within the area of responsibility.

73. In the Central African Republic, the United Nations police presence would be limited to advising and providing technical assistance to the national police and gendarmerie. A group of 20 United Nations police officers would be deployed to Birao for this purpose, on the assumption that area security would be provided by a United Nations military presence. A liaison presence would also be established in Bangui to provide a link with key stakeholders, including the Government, BONUCA and international agencies.

Rule of law

74. The Mission would also require an internal advisory capacity on justice and prison systems, which would also liaise with local justice and prisons officials. The Mission would work in collaboration with the United Nations country team and other international actors.

Human rights

75. The human rights component would carry out human rights monitoring, investigations, reporting and training activities. Particular attention would be paid to the identification of violators of human rights and to the thematic areas of sexual violence and child protection. Human rights officers would be deployed throughout the Mission area and work in close collaboration with other components, including military, police, judicial, corrections and other civilian components, as well as United Nations agencies funds and programmes and other humanitarian actors on the ground to proactively identify potential threats to the civilian population. Human rights officers would also participate in joint analysis with other components of the Mission in order to help establish operational priorities.

76. The human rights component would work in collaboration with the United Nations country team and other actors on activities aimed at strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights. Regular public reports on the human rights situation in the mandated areas of deployment would be issued, with specific recommendations for corrective action by relevant actors.

Humanitarian liaison and coordination

77. Ongoing humanitarian operations in Chad and the Central African Republic would continue to be coordinated by the respective United Nations humanitarian coordinators. While this activity would take place separately from the work of the Mission, United Nations humanitarian coordinators would advise the Head of Mission on humanitarian matters with respect to the mission area and would participate in the Mission's senior management to this end. In addition, a number of humanitarian liaison officers would be deployed as part of the Mission, and based primarily in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic, to ensure appropriate liaison between the Mission, the United Nations country teams and the broader humanitarian community in those areas.

Public information

78. As indicated in the report of my predecessor dated 22 December 2006, an effective public information component would be crucial to ensure widespread understanding of the purpose, objectives and activities of the Mission. This would be accomplished through wide dissemination of consistent messages describing the work of the Mission, which would target the population living in the border areas covered by the Mission, as well as key stakeholders, including specific communities in the area of operations and the national armed forces. The public information component would also develop and disseminate messages focusing on reconciliation and the importance of peace and stability. To accomplish these tasks, the component should have a capacity for public outreach and media relations, and for print and radio production.

Gender

79. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Mission would ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all aspects of its work. A key objective would be to facilitate capacity-building support for both uniformed and civilian elements in the Mission on gender mainstreaming strategies. Technical support and advice would be provided to all Mission components to adequately respond to the identified priorities of women and girls in the sectors of security, protection and human rights.

80. The Mission would pay particular attention to the situation of women and girls directly affected by the conflict. The Mission would document the extent of violence against women and play an advocacy role with local and national authorities to protect civilians and most vulnerable groups. In collaboration with the United Nations agencies and civil society organizations, the Mission would provide support to the national authorities, including the armed forces, the gendarmes and police, to facilitate the implementation of policies and programmes to advance gender equality goals.

81. A gender action plan specifically targeted at eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic would also be implemented and would focus on prevention and response measures to address the high rate of reported incidents of sexual and gender-based violence against refugees, internally displaced persons and civilian population. Addressing HIV/AIDS prevention would also be emphasized.

Conduct and discipline

82. A personnel conduct and discipline unit would be established within the Mission to support my Special Representative in developing strategies and mechanisms to prevent, identify and respond to all forms of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse. The unit would work in collaboration with other components and offices of the Mission to put in place awareness-raising and training activities to prevent misconduct, establish networks of focal points to receive complaints and establish related data management and monitoring systems required to carry out this work. The Mission would also establish capacity for investigation of allegations of misconduct in accordance with established rules and procedures.

HIV/AIDS

83. As indicated in the report dated 22 December 2006, HIV prevalence in both Chad and the Central African Republic is high. Further to Security Council resolution 1308 (2000), the Mission would provide ongoing HIV/AIDS awareness and sensitization programmes for all Mission personnel, uniformed and civilian, including access to HIV voluntary counselling and testing in all areas of deployment. The HIV unit would collaborate with the United Nations county teams and civil society organizations to integrate HIV concerns into the mandate of the Mission, in particular the need to protect vulnerable populations from sexual and gender-based violence and to raise HIV awareness among refugees and IDPs.

Staff safety and security

84. In the light of complex staff security requirements in the Mission area, particularly in eastern Chad, a staff security coordination mechanism would be established in eastern Chad to ensure cooperation among organizations with security capacities in order to promote a safe and secure environment for mandate implementation and programme delivery activities. This mechanism would be essential, given the current United Nations security phase III and IV environment, and the different regional security requirements and threats. In the Central African Republic, existing staff safety and security mechanisms would be augmented in the north-east part of the country, in anticipation of an increase in personnel in that region.

Mine action

85. Although it is estimated that a landmine threat is fairly low in eastern Chad, and particularly along the border with the Central African Republic, there is a confirmed threat from the presence of explosive remnants of war and the potential for landmine use to disrupt the activities of the Mission. In this regard, a mine action unit would assess and verify all routes to be used by the Mission, the United Nations and the humanitarian agencies as safe for traffic. There would be a requirement to deploy a mine survey/explosive ordnance disposal capacity (two teams) to undertake the initial clearance work required to support the work of the Mission.

Mission support

86. The Mission Support Division would be responsible for establishing, operating and maintaining the infrastructure and providing the essential communication, mobility and sustainment capabilities required by the United Nations operation to carry out its responsibilities. As highlighted in my predecessor's report of 22 December 2006, the combination of the landlocked nature of both Chad and the Central African Republic, very harsh environmental conditions, scarcity of resources, and minimal infrastructure would complicate considerably the deployment of the United Nations operation and limit severely the United Nations ability to support its personnel. In particular, an intense rainy season lasting more than five months makes roads impassable for days at a time and turns scrub and forest into swamp. The transport of goods to the Mission would also pose an enormous challenge. As was indicated in the 22 December 2006 report, average transit time for a consignment from Douala in Cameroon to reach Bangui or N'Djamena is about six to eight weeks, depending on the season. Furthermore, when combined with the current level of activities of humanitarian agencies, there would be a clear risk of eroding the currently available natural resources, and water in particular. Any deployment would therefore need to be closely coordinated with the United Nations country teams and other stakeholders working in the concerned areas to assess its impact on the local communities.

87. Support for military units operating in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic would follow United Nations standards for self-sustainment. At the start-up of the Mission, substantial construction of work areas, living space and information technology, as well as security arrangements, would be required. Expeditious establishment of these facilities would likely require significant use of

commercial contractors. In addition, all logistical support into Chad and the Central African Republic would be channelled through two main corridors: from Douala in Cameroon and, to a more limited extent, from Benghazi in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. In addition, it is important to stress that the rainy season in the area of operations would limit the possibility of introducing required material by road. In this regard, the early pre-positioning of strategic deployment stocks to N'Djamena and Bangui would be essential.

VI. Observations and recommendations

88. Eastern Chad is facing a multifaceted security and humanitarian crisis, which includes ongoing clashes between Government forces and Sudan-based Chadian rebels, cross-border attacks on civilians by Sudan-based militia, the presence of Sudanese rebels on Chadian territory, ethnic violence, internal displacement, intercommunal tensions and banditry. The result is an environment of uncertainty, vulnerability and victimization of the local communities and the 232,000 Sudanese refugees in the region, and, above all, of the 120,000 internally displaced persons in eastern Chad.

89. As the United Nations seeks to determine the most effective way to address these challenges, it is important to note that eastern Chad is not a conventional peacekeeping environment. Although the Chadian armed forces have recently pushed the rebels back to the border with Darfur or beyond, prospects for durable peace and security in the area are still unclear. In addition, the crisis in Darfur shows no signs of abating, and the ongoing unrest in that region is a major impediment to establishing peace and stability in eastern Chad. In Chad itself, hostilities between the Government and armed opposition groups continue, and efforts at political dialogue have not gained momentum. Intercommunal tensions, which constitute a threat to the civilian population, are also a cause for concern.

90. The open-ended deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force into this challenging environment would therefore carry distinct and serious risks. Chief among these is the possibility that armed groups may view a United Nations force as interfering with their military agenda and decide to attack it. It would be imperative therefore to obtain assurances from Chadian rebel groups that they would recognize the impartial character of a United Nations presence. There is also the possibility that a United Nations force, while carrying out its protection functions in such a fluid environment, could find itself caught in the cross-fire between belligerents.

91. To mitigate these risks, a United Nations force should be clearly focused on two principal objectives: protecting civilians at risk, particularly internally displaced persons and refugees; and deterring cross-border attacks through its presence. Should the Security Council decide to establish such a force, I would recommend that option B (see para. 68 above) be selected, since its combination of size and mobility would provide the capacity to carry out the proposed tasks effectively and respond to unforeseen events. It will be essential, in this regard, for Member States, to provide as soon as possible, an indication of their readiness to make available the necessary well trained and equipped troops and police personnel. The size of the force would be kept under review and adjusted as the security situation improves.

92. The United Nations operation could also work in parallel to contribute to ongoing efforts to settle the crisis in Darfur and assist, as necessary, in developing a

political climate conducive to peace, stability and reconciliation in eastern Chad. In addition, it would be important to move forward expeditiously with the relocation of refugee camps that are near the border with the Sudan, in particular the camps of Am Nabak and Oure Cassoni, located near Bahai. Moving these camps to appropriate sites away from the border would make it easier to preserve their civilian and humanitarian character and to eliminate potential flash points on the border. However, significant national and international assistance would be required for this purpose.

93. The deployment of a multidimensional United Nations operation in eastern Chad will require the full support and cooperation of the Government. However, as mentioned in paragraph 33, President Déby expressed some concerns about the military component of the proposed mission during his meeting with the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on 5 February. I will inform the Security Council of President Déby's final decision in this regard, as soon as it is communicated to me.

94. In north-eastern Central African Republic, the situation is less acute, and the agreement between the Government and rebel groups to negotiate an end to their conflict is an encouraging development. At the same time, there is continued risk that violence may erupt again, as long as there is conflict across the border in the Sudan and eastern Chad, and lingering intercommunal tensions in the Vakaga prefecture. In this respect, a modest deployment of United Nation military and police personnel would have a stabilizing effect on the situation in north-eastern Central African Republic.

95. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that responsibility for achieving a lasting solution to the crisis in Darfur, eastern Chad and north-eastern Central African Republic rests, first and foremost, with the leaders of these countries. I call on their Governments to move forward rapidly and to muster the political will to establish peace and stability in their countries and in the region. A concrete first step for Chad and the Sudan would be to implement the Tripoli and N'Djamena agreements as a matter of priority. In the Central African Republic, the political dialogue initiative must be given all the support required for it to take root. There is also a major role for the international community to play by sending a clear message that dialogue and reconciliation are the only acceptable and realistic paths to sustainable peace and development.